

## Baird Secures \$57.5 Million for Southwest Washington Transportation Projects in Major House Bill (March 10, 2005)

Washington, D.C. - Congressman Brian Baird used his position on the influential House Transportation Committee to secure \$57.5 million in crucial funding for our region in a major transportation bill passed by the House today.

The funding was included in HR 3, the Transportation Equity Act: Legacy for Users (TEA-LU). TEA-LU would authorize \$284 billion for highway, public transportation and road safety projects for the six-year period from fiscal year 2004 through fiscal year 2009.

"The funding included in this bill will create many new jobs and boost our local economies," said Baird. "I am very proud we have secured this funding in the House version of this bill. It is a huge step in bringing these important resources back to our state. TEA-LU would allow us to build safer, less congested roads, which will improve the quality of life in Southwest Washington in many ways."

HR 3 is the latest in a series of bills outlining transportation spending priorities for the nation. Last year, both the House and Senate passed versions of the transportation reauthorization bill, but neither bill was enacted into law.

Clark County projects secured by Rep. Baird include:

I-5 Columbia River Crossing preliminary engineering and EIS: \$12.854 million

Provides funding for preliminary engineering and an Environmental Impact Study for improvements to Interstate 5 (I-5) between SR 500 in Vancouver, Washington, and Marine Drive in Portland, Oregon. The funds will be used to carefully explore Columbia River crossing options within the I-5 corridor between the two states. Improvements will address the ever-increasing passenger and freight congestion that creates severe delays for commuters and traffic safety concerns in the Portland/Vancouver region.

I-5/Salmon Creek Area Improvement Project: \$13 million

Provides funding for road improvements in the NE 134th Street/I-5/I-205 corridor in the northern urban area of Clark County. Funds will be used to alleviate congestion and improve safety in the vicinity of the freeway interchanges.

I-5: Delta Park to Lombard: \$5 million

Provides funding to move forward on the Delta Park project, which will construct an additional southbound lane between Delta Park and the Lombard Interchange on I-5. Because the freeway narrows from three lanes to two in this area, freight haulers and commuters experience significant delays during peak hours. The secured funds will be used to increase freeway capacity, thereby improving traffic flow and safety for those traveling through this area.

18th Street between 87th Avenue and I-205: \$2 million

Project will widen and extend NE 18th Street between NE 87th Avenue and NE 192nd Avenue and add sidewalks and pedestrian pathways, street lights, and traffic signals. The improved 18th Street will provide access to the planned new freeway interchange and help alleviate growing congestion on Burton Road, Mill Plain Boulevard, and NE 112th Avenue.

SR 14 Corridor Camas/Washougal: \$3 million

Funds preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for improvements to State Route 14 through the Camas/Washougal area. SR 14 is a critical bottleneck responsible for numerous accidents.

I-5/SR501 Interchange replacement in Ridgefield: \$600,000

Project consists of replacing the current, congested interchange with a Single Point Urban Interchange and widening SR 501. The project is necessary to accommodate anticipated growth in area, as dictated by the State's growth management plan.

SR 503 Widening in Woodland: \$1 million

Provides funding to improve SR 503 within the city of Woodland. This route and interchange provide access to the south side of Mt. St. Helens and the Lewis River Valley residential, commercial, and recreational areas.

I-5/SR 503 Access Study and Development Plan: \$300,000

Project will improve the interchange at I-5 and SR 503. Funds will be used for an Access Study and Development Plan to modernize the existing interchange and corridor.

Mill Plain Blvd Improvement: \$1.25 million

Provides funding to improve Mill Plain Blvd between 172nd and I-205. The project will add capacity and relieve congestion on adjacent corridors and will serve two large new commercial developments.

Confluence Project: \$2 million

Provides funding for the effort of the City of Vancouver, the National Park Service and WSDOT to connect the Fort of Vancouver National Historical site to the Columbia River Waterfront by means of a pedestrian land bridge spanning SR-14 east of I-5.

Cowlitz County projects secured by Rep. Baird include:

I-5 Columbia River Crossing preliminary engineering and EIS: \$12.854 million

Provides funding for preliminary engineering and an Environmental Impact Study for improvements to Interstate 5 (I-5) between SR 500 in Vancouver, Washington, and Marine Drive in Portland, Oregon. The funds will be used to carefully explore Columbia River crossing options within the I-5 corridor between the two states. Improvements will address the ever-increasing passenger and freight congestion that creates severe delays for commuters and traffic safety concerns in the Portland/Vancouver region.

I-5/SR 503 Access Study and Development Plan: \$300,000

Project will improve the interchange at I-5 and SR 503. Funds will be used for an Access Study and Development Plan to modernize the existing interchange and corridor.

SR 503 Widening in Woodland: \$1 million

Provides funding to improve SR 503 within the city of Woodland. This route and interchange provide access to the south

side of Mt. St. Helens and the Lewis River Valley residential, commercial, and recreational areas.

**SR 4/411 Urban Area Congestion/Renewal Plan: \$2 million**

Provides funding for the realignment of West Main Street through west Kelso, moving traffic to Catlin Street, which has an intersection with a traffic signal at Ocean Beach Highway (SR 4). This will allow for one signaled intersection to be eliminated and for smoother, more user-friendly traffic routes for vehicles turning northbound on to SR 411.

**SR 432 Improvements: \$1.75 million**

Provides funding for a project that installs dual left turn lanes and traffic signal modifications at SR 433, and a two-way left turn lane between SR 433 and the beginning of the existing two-way left turn lane east of Columbia Blvd. The addition of these lanes will reduce the congestion that currently affects both highways and railways.

Lewis County projects secured by Rep. Baird include:

**I-5 Widening from Rush Road to Grand Mound: \$5.35 million**

Provides additional funding for the I-5 widening project in Lewis County. The project will add one additional lane on I-5 in each direction. Funds will be used to address the bottlenecks that frequently occur in this stretch of I-5, thereby improving traffic flow and safety.

**Chehalis Community Pathway: \$50,000**

Provides funding to study options for a planned community pathway through Chehalis. The analysis will include a public involvement process, and then a formal design of the facility. The proposed pathway would connect the Port of Chehalis Industrial Park, Stan Headwall Park, and a National Avenue site where two historic museums are planned.

**Willapa Hills Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail: \$700,000**

Project seeks to convert a former railroad into a 56 mile bicycle and pedestrian trail from Chehalis to Raymond. The project is expected to stimulate increased tourism economic growth in Southwest Washington communities.

Pacific County projects secured by Rep. Baird include:

**Willapa Hills Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail: \$700,000**

Project seeks to convert a former railroad into a 56 mile bicycle and pedestrian trail from Chehalis to Raymond. The project is expected to stimulate economic growth in Southwest Washington communities.

**Lewis and Clark Scenic Overlook: \$146,000**

Provides funding for the Lewis and Clark Discovery Trailhead and Scenic Overlook project, which will expand the size and increase safety at the current overlook location. Serving as a trailhead, this overlook is a historic viewpoint on the Lewis and Clark Trail that provides a vista of the Pacific Ocean and is frequented by thousands of visitors every year.

**Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Transit: \$100,000**

Funding will allow the City of Ilwaco and Port of Ilwaco to purchase transit vehicles to accommodate the anticipated influx of visitors to the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

Ilwaco Park and Ride: \$100,000

Funding will allow the City of Ilwaco and Port of Ilwaco to create a park and ride to facilitate the use shuttles to Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, relieving significant roadway congestion.

Thurston County projects secured by Rep. Baird include:

Chehalis-Western Trail ĩ½Bridging the Gapĩ½ Project: \$5 million

Provides funding for a project that will ĩ½bridge the gapĩ½ in the backbone of the Thurston County regionĩ½s north-south non-motorized corridor. Specifically, the project constructs a .6 mile pedestrian and bike bridge over I-5, thereby connecting separate parts of the Chehalis-Western Trail system. The total system reflects a fifteen-year commitment of local, state, and regional agencies to develop this non-motorized transportation system.

Bus Replacement: \$900,000

Provides funding for the replacement of vehicles for the Intercity Transit fleet.

Wahkiakum County projects secured by Rep. Baird include:

Puget Island Ferry Landing: \$250,000

Project will reconfigure the Wahkiakum County Puget Island Ferry landing to more safely and efficiently accommodate truck and automobile traffic.